Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

Last week’s unanimous vote capped several months of negotiations on an education reform package that many of us would have never thought possible just a few short months ago. Senate Bill 630, sponsored by Senator Kimberly Lightford, was the result of intense collaboration by a variety of stakeholder groups, including unions, administrators, parents, reform advocates, legislators and the State Board of Education.

This legislation continues to build on the major policy changes that we’ve seen in our Illinois education system during the past three years. It balances doing what’s best for students, while preserving fairness for adults involved in the process. It brings added accountability to local board members, administrators and teachers. It goes a long way to ensuring that the decisions that we make always come back to what’s best for student learning. You can read the entire bill at http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/billstatus.asp?DocNum=630&GAIND=11&GA=97&DocTypeID=SB&LegID=55459&SessionID=84.

It passed the Senate on a 59-0 vote and is now in the House.

In addition, a study commissioned by the Illinois State Board of Education found kindergarteners who had been in state-funded preschool showed significant improvements in school readiness and social skills. Improvements were seen across all income groups with children from low-income families and those at risk showing the most gains in attention span and ability to complete tasks.

Researchers at the Chicago-based Erikson Institute assessed children in programs at the beginning of their preschool year in fall 2009 at age 4 and again in fall 2010 as they entered kindergarten. By kindergarten, the participating children showed increased language skills, improved social skills, reduced problem behavior, increased attention and ability to complete tasks.

Additional data will be released from the study within the next several weeks. You can find out more about this study at http://www.isbe.net.

Finally, I wanted to let you know that we have received some additional information on the federal budget agreement announced last week. It includes almost level funding for Title I and Individuals With Disabilities Education Act, however, they are subject to a 0.2 percent across the board cut to domestic spending. In addition, the Department has received $700 million for another round of Race to the Top and $150 million in Investing in Innovations competitive grant funds.

Have a great week.

Chris
Upcoming Dates and Deadlines

- Part 1 (Public Schools Evaluation, Recognition and Supervision) and Part 350 (Secular Textbook Loan) – Public comment period ends April 18
- ISBE Parent Involvement Regional Summits registration deadline – April 25
- Illinois School Wellness Conference in Decatur – May 3
- ISBE Parent Involvement Regional Summit, Oak Lawn (Ill.) Hilton – May 5
- ISBE Parent Involvement Regional Summit, Lisle (Ill.) Hilton – May 6
- ISBE Parent Involvement Regional Summit, Abraham Lincoln Hotel & Conference Center in Springfield – May 9
- ISBE Parent Involvement Regional Summit, Williamson Co. Pavilion in Marion – May 17
- Illinois Young Authors’ Conference – May 21
- Illinois New Teacher Collaborative Beginning Teacher Conference – June 28
- 2010-11 Eye Examination Data Collection deadline – June 30
- 2011 Bilingual Education Program Delivery Report deadline – June 30
- Prekindergarten At-Risk Program Record and the Preschool For All Program Record deadline – June 30
- 2010-11 Early Childhood – Parent Evaluations/Demographics survey deadline – July 15
- Postmark deadline for waiver applications to be considered by General Assembly in Fall ‘11 – Aug. 12
- 2010-11 Teacher Service Record submission deadline – Aug. 15
- 2010-11 High School Students Taking Community College Courses system district-level data submission deadline – Sept. 15

If you have questions, please contact Kim Lewis at klewis@isbe.net, Marj Beck at mbeck@isbe.net or Sally Cray at scray@isbe.net in the Division of Funding and Disbursement Services at (217) 782-5256.

Funding and Disbursement Services

FY 2012 Federal Grants Reimbursement Policy Change – Update

ISBE has made a significant policy change that will impact the distribution of Federal grant funds beginning in FY 2012. An initial webinar was conducted on Jan. 13 that provided a broad overview of the changes. Significant progress has been made since the January webinar, including the development of a Modified Advance Reimbursement model which will give LEAs flexibility by combining the features of the preferred Traditional Reimbursement method (i.e. receiving payments through a cumulative expenditure report) but allows LEAs the option of an advance payment (i.e. requesting a month end advance payment that is expected to be fully expended by the end of the next month). Details of the new procedures can be accessed at http://www.isbe.net/funding/html/reimb_policy_change.htm.

ISBE has scheduled a follow-up webinar on Thursday, May 5, from 2-3 p.m. to review the policy changes in detail. Local education agencies and other interested stakeholders can register at https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/982072824.

File 2010-2011 Final Public School Calendars via IWAS

The ability to file the 2010-11 Final Public School Calendar will be available May 1, 2011, via IWAS. Please complete and transmit the Final Calendar to the appropriate Regional Superintendent by the last day of school.

REMINDER: The document type Final Calendar must be submitted even if the district has submitted a document type Amended Calendar previously. A Final Public School Calendar must be transmitted and approved prior to filing the 2010-2011 claims for General State Aid, Pupil Transportation and 18-3 Regular Education Orphanage.

HELPFUL HINT: The unused proposed emergency days (XED) that are coded at the end of the school calendar may be removed by correcting the Regular School End Date to the last day of actual school activity and clicking the Save Dates/Times button. Once the Regular School End Date has been updated, the calendar codes after that date will be omitted.
If you have questions that are not addressed in the Public School Calendar Guidelines, you can contact the office of your Regional Superintendent or Marj Beck at the Illinois State Board of Education, mbeck@isbe.net or telephone (217) 782-5256.

If you encounter technical issues with the Public School Calendar in IWAS please contact the ISBE Call Center at (217) 558-3600 during business hours: Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

**Educator and School Development**

**Illinois New Teacher Collaborative Beginning Teacher Conference Set**

Registration for the second annual Illinois New Teacher Collaborative Beginning Teacher Conference “Y2: Moving Beyond Survival” is now open.

The conference, set for June 28 in Champaign, is open to teachers completing their first year of teaching in Illinois. This conference has no registration fee and hotel rooms are provided by INTC thanks to the sponsorship of the State Farm Companies Foundation.

If you know of first-year teachers who may be interested in attending this conference, they can find more information about the conference and register at http://intc.education.illinois.edu/page/intc-beginning-teacher-conference.

**New School Health Issues Web Page on ISBE Site Offers Variety of Resources**

The new School Health Issues page is now available at http://www.isbe.net/school_health.htm. Topics regarding asthma, dental health, diabetes, eye health, food allergies, health forms, immunizations, lead screening, legislation, school health notices and resources, and school wellness are included on this page. Please share this information with school nurses and school health personnel.

**Curriculum and Instruction**

**2012 APC – College and Career Success for All Students Program Grant Webinar**

Schools and districts interested in applying for the 2012 Advanced Placement Classroom (APC) – College and Career Success for All Students Program Grant are invited to participate in an informational webinar from 11 a.m. to noon on May 2, 2011.

Schools with a 40 percent or more low income population interested in developing or expanding a Pre AP/AP program or enhancing a program already in place may apply for the grant (feeder school data can be used to meet the 40 percent criteria). The goal of the grant is to recruit and increase the number of low income students participating in Pre AP/AP classes. Schools and districts can use money from the grant to train teachers in Pre AP/AP instruction, increase the number of classes offered, purchase materials needed for Pre AP/AP classes and provide tutoring opportunities. Twenty percent of the grant must go to College Board trainings and workshops.

The webinar will cover eligibility guidelines, the application process, timelines and fiscal information. Questions can be directed to Mike Hatfill at dhatfill@isbe.net. Register at https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/462280433.

**High School Students Invited to Join ISBE Advisory Council**

The Illinois State Board of Education is accepting applications for the Student Advisory Council for the 2011-12 school year. There are 10 openings on the 15-member council. Any Illinois public school student who will be a sophomore, junior or senior is eligible to apply.

The Student Advisory Council was created in 1975 to bring student concerns to the attention of ISBE. Each year, the Student Advisory Council presents research and makes policy recommendations to the board. Council members attend board meetings and sessions of the General Assembly. Through this experience, students will gain an understanding of the educational issues facing Illinois schools.

An application is available online at http://www.isbe.net/SAC/default.htm. It must be returned to the State Board of Education by 4 p.m. Friday, May 27, 2011. The mailing address is: Illinois State Board of Education, Curriculum and Instruction, 100 N. First St, C-215, Springfield, IL 62777.

Activities of the Student Advisory Council in 2010-11 are contingent upon final state budget allocation. For more information, contact the division of Curriculum and Instruction at (217) 557-7323.
Innovation and Improvement

ISBE Seeking Applicants for the Consolidated Committee of Practitioners

The Illinois State Board of Education is currently seeking interested applicants to serve as a member of the Consolidated Committee of Practitioners. The Consolidated Committee of Practitioners, by Federal law, is to advise the Illinois State Board of Education on the implementation of programs under the Elementary and Secondary Act to ensure high quality services are available for all students, especially those most in need. The committee consists of representatives from local education agencies, superintendents, administrators, teachers, parents, local school boards, private school entities, public school personnel and practitioners from all parts of our state.

The Consolidated Committee of Practitioners is seeking to fill the vacancies within the areas of parents, private school officials, teachers, administrator of NCLB programs and vocational educators. If you are interested, please submit a Letter of Interest and Resume to Cheryl Ivy, Principal Consultant, Illinois State Board of Education, Innovation and Improvement Division, N-242, Springfield, IL 62777-0001. Your information should be received no later than May 6, 2011.

Special Education

National Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day Scheduled for May 3

National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day is a day to join the Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration, communities, organizations, agencies and individuals nationwide in raising awareness that positive mental health is essential to a child's healthy development from birth and that children with behavioral health needs can thrive in their communities.

This year, the national theme will focus on building resilience in young children dealing with trauma. To learn more, visit http://www.samhsa.gov/children.

Nutrition

Dairy Fully Fueled Tour Accepting Applications From Eligible Schools

The St. Louis District Dairy Council is accepting applications for the third annual Dairy Fully Fueled Schools Tour. Dairy Fully Fueled is an innovative and interactive program designed to give students a unique experience of the power of healthy eating. The fall tour aims to reward Illinois schools for their efforts toward building healthier student bodies with a day of physical activity, fun, games and nutrition know-how.

Funded by local dairy farmers, the tour has visited more than 70 local schools who have demonstrated their commitment to building healthier student bodies. Applications are open to schools in the 81 Illinois counties served by St. Louis District Dairy Council.

The application deadline is April 30. Check out http://www.dairyfullyfueled.com/dairy/Index.asp for application materials and video highlights from last year’s school tour, which reached more than 15,000 students.

Illinois School Wellness Conference Scheduled for May 3 in Decatur


The conference is ideal for school administrators, school nurses, educators, food service staff, wellness committee members, parents, students and anyone else who wants to learn more about encouraging healthy lifestyles and healthy food at school. Topics to be covered include Food Trends in Schools, Fuel Up to Play 60, The New P.E., Wellness Success Stories From Illinois, Ways to Host Healthy Fundraisers, and healthy food options in school stores and concession stands.

Dr. Toni Yancey, author of “Instant Recess: Building a Fit National 10 Minutes at a Time,” has been selected as keynote speaker. Yancey played basketball for Northwestern University and is a professor in the UCLA Department of Health. She is also a national board member for Action for Healthy Kids. Her presentation will be based on her book, which provides solutions to encourage students to get moving.

The first 50 people to register for the conference will receive a free copy of Yancey’s book. Registration on or before April 19 is $45 per person, and rises to $55. Students can purchase tickets for $25 each. For additional details about the conference and to register, go to http://take.actionforhealthykids.org/site/Clubs?club_id=1121&pg=main.
Data Analysis and Progress Reporting

2011 Bilingual Education Program Delivery Report Available on IWAS

The 2011 Bilingual Education Program Delivery Report is available on IWAS. Each school district or other local education agency operating a school or program that had students with limited English proficiency enrolled during the 2010-11 school year is required to submit this report to ISBE, per 23 Illinois Administrative Code 228.40(c)(2). The deadline for the report is June 30, 2011. The guide for submission of the report is at ftp://help.isbe.net/webapps/BilEdPgmDelRpt/pdf/PDRUs erGuide.pdf.

Questions about using the Bilingual Education PDR system on IWAS should be referred to the ISBE Help Desk at (217) 558-3600. Questions about completing the Bilingual Education PDR should be referred to Lilibeth Q. Gumia in the Data Analysis and Progress Reporting Division at (217) 782-3950 or lgumia@isbe.net.

Teacher and Principal Evaluation Survey Results Available Online

ISBE conducted a survey of all public school districts regarding both teacher and principal evaluations. This survey was required by the federal government in connection with the State’s previous receipt of Federal State Fiscal Stabilization Funds. The goal of the survey was to enable State officials, parents, local educators and other stakeholders to measure Illinois’ progress towards improving teacher effectiveness and achieving equity in the distribution of teachers and principals. The initial survey resulted in a 60.5 percent response rate from districts. Response data from the survey is posted at http://www.isbe.net/PEAC/html/surveyresults.htm.

Stakeholders are encouraged to visit this site to view the status of Teacher and Principal Evaluation practices within Illinois School Districts. For questions, contact Patrick Murphy, Educator and School Development, at pmurphy@isbe.net or (217) 782-2948.

U.S. Department of Education

Guidance on Protection of Students From Sexual Harassment, Violence

The Office for Civil Rights in the U.S. Department of Education recently issued guidance concerning recipients’ obligations to protect students from sexual harassment and sexual violence. Read the letter at http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleagu e-201104.html.

The Dear Colleague letter explains the requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 as they relate to student-on-student sexual harassment and violence. The letter also discusses the proactive efforts schools can take to prevent sexual violence and educate employees and students, and it provides examples of the types of remedies that schools and OCR may use to respond to such conduct.

Student Opportunities

Operation Purple Summer Camps Offer Support to Military Children

The National Military Family Association is accepting applications for its Operation Purple Summer Camps. This free summer camp program was developed by the association to support military children ages 7-17 dealing with the stress of war.

Each camp is open to children of active duty, National Guard or Reserve service members from the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, or the Commissioned Corps of the US Public Health Service and NOAA. Applications will only be accepted online. Visit http://www.militaryfamily.org/our-programs/operation-purple/2011-camps/.

In this eighth summer of the program, Operation Purple camps will host an estimated 3,500 children at 40 weeks of camp in 25 states as well as one overseas location.

Employment Opportunities

ISBE External Vacancy List

An External Vacancy List for the Illinois State Board of Education is available at http://www.isbe.net/hr/Default.htm.

In the News

Weekly News Clips